

INTERN MINISTER

Greetings from the Twitter-verse!

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As a reminder, I explore each month's Soul Connections theme on my Twitter account (@



kellieuukelly) using a hashtag (#) and the month's theme (example: "#Identity"). I also would love to join your explorations of the monthly themes—simply include my Twitter handle at the beginning of your Tweet: "@kellieuukelly" or post

to my Facebook wall. For those of you who aren't interested or able to sign up for a Twitter account, I include some of my favorite tweets here in our newsletter.

So this month, we explore #Risk.

In my kitchen, I have a greeting card taped to the cabinet door where my dishes are. It was one of the first things I unpacked and put up when I moved in six years ago. When I first saw this card in the store, my eyes became moist as my heart read the words. I knew immediately that I had to buy it. I was about to embark on one of the biggest risks of my life.

The card is a quotation from the writer Anais Nin, "Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage."

It seems to me that personal risk takes a whole lot of courage, trust, and faith. And/or a really great sense of humor, ha.

How different is it to be a community of risk?

One of the reasons that I love Unitarian Universalism is that it calls us to our best selves and to our highest aspirations, our seven Principles. If you think about it, our first Principle is about as risky as it gets. As UUs, we affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Yup, this means every person, no exceptions. This means the person who voted differently from us—the person who took our seat on the bus—the person who bombed a street market across the world—the person who broke our heart—the person who participated in genocide. As I said earlier, I don't know how much more risk a community can take on.

Like personal risk, the communal risk of affirming and promoting the worth and dignity of every person takes a whole lot of courage, trust, and faith. And yes, a really great sense of humor is helpful.

What does it actually mean to "affirm and promote

the inherent worth and dignity of every person"? Does that mean that we must accept all their behavior and beliefs? Does that mean we must accept the pain and abuse they cause us or others?

No. Our first Principle does not stop us from rejecting behavior or beliefs that we believe are harmful. Our first Principle does not stop us from protecting ourselves or others (both human and non-human).

Instead, our first Principle requires us to believe that somewhere inside every person is a goodness that is buried and cannot be destroyed (no matter how evil the behavior).

Our first Principle calls us to risk trying to find each person's goodness. Our first Principle calls us to risk trying to understand our enemy's perspective. Our first Principle calls us to risk seeing ourselves as no better or worse than our enemy. Our first Principle calls us to risk being in relationship with our enemies and to risk even being changed by them for the better.

As one of America's greatest risk-takers, Helen Keller, said, "No pessimist ever discovered the secrets of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new heaven to the human spirit." As a recovering pessimist and aspiring optimist, I can tell you with certainty, pessimists are not risk-takers.

As individuals and as a community, we will not continue to grow unless we take risks. If we did not take the risk of a trying a new religion or church, many of us wouldn't even be part of this community today.

May courage, trust, faith, and, yes, even humor hold us as we risk together!

With gratitude, Kellie

Kellie Kelly @kellieuukelly · Feb 24
Boo @thedistrict211 for your bad treatment of @TransEquality! I'm district and mad! Thank you @ACLU! medium.com/stand-with-g #Identity



Getting It Right for Transgender Students - Stand With Gavin
What our client wants is pretty basic — to be accepted for who she is and treated just like other students.
medium.com

Kellie Kelly @kellieuukelly · Feb 10
#WhoAreUU #Identity @utuuc
Leslie Mac @LeslieMac
Anti-Blackness is a nation being moved to action by photos at airports but silenced by a 12 year old Black boy killed on camera.